

Be it resolved that the Select Committee on Ethics should, when it releases its final report concerning Representative NEWT GINGRICH, disclose to the public all documents concerning the matter, including but not limited to the work of the special counsel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time or place designated by the Chair in the legislative schedule within 2 legislative days its being properly noticed. That designation will be announced at a later time. In the meantime, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentleman from California will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair is not at this point making a determination as to whether or not the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for the consideration of the resolution.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. THURMAN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT ESSENTIAL FOR COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, today, January 9, is a monumental day for post-secondary education. Just a few hours ago President Clinton announced that the college loan default rate has fallen to a 7-year low which translates into lower interest rates and more loans for young people. From a high of 22.4 percent in 1990 the default rate has dropped to approximately 10½ percent, and I applaud the Clinton administration for its efforts to improve the collection of defaulted loans and to prevent loans from falling into default status.

The Department of Education has done a sensational job in counseling

students about their loan responsibilities and helping to create more flexible payment options for young people. A spokesman for the American Council on Education, an association representing colleges and universities, stated, "This administration has tightened up on weaknesses in the system, and defaults are down."

I agree, Mr. Speaker, with my colleagues who suggest we need to reform our educational system. However, I disagree with those who call for the abolition of the Department of Education. To the contrary, we need to expand the role of the Federal Government with respect to education and educational funding.

Recently, the Department of Education released Pursuing Excellence: A Study of Eighth Grade Mathematics and Science Teaching, Learning, Curriculum and Achievement in International Context. The results were not surprising. Although the United States is making progress compared to our major economic and political allies, Mr. Speaker, we must do much more. We must and can do so much for our children.

Instead of focusing entirely on punishing and sentencing young people, we should be searching for ways to challenge and propel people into the 21st century equipped with the tools to keep America competitive and make these young people viable holders of jobs in the marketplace.

As a new Member of Congress I intend to reach out to all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, particularly those in my own class. I was heartened yesterday, Mr. Speaker, by an encounter that I had with my new friend, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. GRANGER]. Strong bipartisan support is essential for any dynamic and comprehensive educational reform package to gain the support of the American people.

The investment in America that will generate the largest yield is an investment in America's potential. That is the education of our youth. As I stated earlier, this investment effort must be driven by bipartisanship and common sense rather than partisan ideology which lacks both a vision and a mandate.

I was pleased to see the Speaker both contrite and repentant in his view of the work facing the 105th Congress. The circumstances surrounding his election and the will of the American people necessitate our building together for the best interests, working together for the best interests of the future of America.

TAKING AIM AT OUR NATION'S PROBLEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take this opportunity to rise and

follow up on our wonderful celebration on Tuesday of this week when the new Congress, the 105th Congress in our country's history, was sworn in and to remind my colleagues that amidst our welcome celebration it is good to harken back to the words of Winston Churchill, who said in 1942, "The problems of victory are more agreeable than those of defeat, but they are no less difficult."

With that in mind, I am anxious to work with my like minded colleagues on both sides of the political aisle to serve our constituents, who elected us to solve the many problems facing our country today, and make no doubt about it, those problems are real and they are severe.

Bill Bennett, a man that I very much respect, former Education Secretary and Drug Czar, was quoted the other day as saying the following: "America is the most powerful, affluent and envied nation in the world, but America also leads the industrialized world in rates of murder, violent crime, juvenile crime, imprisonment, abortion, divorce and single-parent families, the production and consumption of pornography, the production and consumption of drugs, and that is just a partial list."

So, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the lasting lesson of this election, the lasting lesson of politics in America has little to do with the big winners and losers on election day. The real moral of the story, the real moral of this election is simply this. Our faith in our politics cannot be separated as we look at the issues and as we address the problems facing the American people. Whether it be crime in the streets, skyrocketing teen drug use, problems in education, a tax system that bankrupts the family, the crisis of illegitimacy and so forth, an individual's position on these topics is greatly influenced by one's moral and religious perspective.

In fact, as the Speaker suggested in his remarks to the Congress 2 days ago, religion is the single most important factor in determining how we vote. It is more influential than gender, race, or income. Still there are some who want to take morality and religion out of politics altogether. They want our leaders to conduct their business while keeping religious and moral convictions outside of the political debate. After all they would argue you cannot legislate morality.

In truth, however, the only thing that can be legislated is morality, for every legislative act is a moral judgment. Abraham Lincoln understood this clearly when in 1860 our country faced a similar cultural crisis. His opponents and even some of his political advisers told him then not to bring morality into politics or politics into religion, but he saw through their empty arguments and recognized slavery for what it was, a moral crisis that demanded a political response. Lincoln was a true statesman. He understood the moral of the story.